

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 201575

43

ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 EB-07

SCSE-00 SCA-01 CPR-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 /081 R

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XR

SUBJECT: NOON PRESS BRIEFING -- CUBA

FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AT STATE DEPARTMENT NOON  
BRIEFING AUGUST 22 CONCERNING U.S. ACTION ON TRADE WITH  
CUBA:

Q: BOB, THERE IS A STORY THAT CASTRO IS PLEASED WITH THE  
U.S. ACTION ON THE TRADE SITUATION BUT SAYS THAT THERE  
MUST BE A COMPLETE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS BEFORE DISCUSSIONS  
ON RESUMING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS CAN GET UNDER WAY. IS  
THE UNITED STATES PREPARED TO GO AHEAD WITH THAT?

A: WE HAVE SAID ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, AND WE CON-  
FIRMED YESTERDAY, THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO MOVE ON A  
RECIPROCAL BASIS WITH CUBA. AS YOU KNOW, THERE ARE STILL  
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PAGE 02 STATE 201575

A NUMBER OF MAJOR OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN OUR BILATERAL

RELATIONS WITH CUBA. TRADE IS ONE; AND FAMILY VISITS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS; AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO ARE PRISONERS IN CUBAN JAILS; COMPENSATION FOR EXPROPRIATED U.S. PROPERTY; CUBA'S ATTITUDE ON PUERTO RICO; AND WHETHER CUBA IS PREPARED TO FOLLOW A CLEAR PRACTICE OF NONINTERVENTION EVERYWHERE IN THE HEMISPHERE. THESE ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED.

Q: HAVE YOU HAD ANY OVERTURES FROM THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT?

A: NOT THAT I AM AWARE OF.

Q: DOES THE U.S. WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY FOR DISCUSSIONS ON BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITHOUT ANY PRECONDITIONS?

A: WE HAVE STATED VERY CLEARLY, THE SECRETARY HAS STATED, THAT WE ARE PREPARED FOR SERIOUS EXCHANGES WITH CUBA ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY.

Q: IN THAT SPEECH, CASTRO WAS ASKED WHETHER THERE COULD BE NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT THE FORM OF NEGOTIATIONS IN VIEW OF HIS INSISTENCE THAT THE BLOCKADE MUST BE LIFTED AS A PREREQUISITE TO FURTHER NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. DO YOU KNOW IF THE UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN SUCH NEGOTIATIONS?

A: I THINK I WILL JUST LEAVE IT WITH THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENT THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO HAVE SERIOUS EXCHANGES ON THE BASIS OF RECIPROCITY.

Q: HOW MANY U.S. PRISONERS ARE THERE?

A: I DO NOT HAVE THAT FIGURE HERE.

Q: WAS MR. NIXON CONSULTED ON THIS MOVE?

A: WAS MR. NIXON CONSULTED ON THIS MOVE? NOT THAT I AM AWARE OF, NO.

Q: CONCERNING THESE MEASURES WHICH WERE REPEALED YESTER-  
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PAGE 03 STATE 201575

DAY REGARDING TRADE WITH CUBA, DO YOU CONSIDER THEM A FAILURE IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THEY DID NOT ACHIEVE THE DESIRED OBJECTIVE OF BRINGING CASTRO TO HIS KNEES THROUGH ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION?

A: YOU ARE TALKING IN TERMS OF THE WHOLE CUBAN PROGRAM?

Q: WELL, THE VARIOUS EMBARGOES THAT WE IMPOSED TWELVE,

THIRTEEN, OR FOURTEEN YEARS AGO WHICH ALL HAVE BEEN REMOVED OR ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING REMOVED EXCEPT FOR THESE BILATERALS. THEIR OBJECTIVE, AS I RECALL, WAS TO BRING CASTRO TO HIS KNEES. THIS HASN'T HAPPENED.

A: I DO NOT KNOW THAT THAT WAS THE OBJECTIVE, GEORGE. THERE WERE OTHER OBJECTIVES, WHICH WERE TO REDUCE CUBA'S CAPABILITY FOR INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE HEMISPHERE. BUT THERE WERE OTHER OBJECTIVES AND OTHER REASONS BEHIND THAT. I DO NOT THINK I HAVE TIME HERE TO GET INTO A LONG HISTORICAL

ANALYSIS OF THAT WHOLE STORY.

Q: YOU SAY WE ARE READY TO MOVE ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS. WHO TAKES THE INITIATIVE? ARE WE PREPARED TO ASK THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS?

A: WE HAVE SAID THAT WE ARE PREPARED. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT THE MOST USEFUL WAY WOULD BE THROUGH PRIVATE NEGOTIATIONS.

Q: IS IT THE VIEW OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT THE LATTER OBJECTIVE WHICH YOU ENUNCIATED WITH RESPECT TO THE CUBAN EMBARGO HAS BEEN MET?

A: I'LL LET OTHER PEOPLE JUDGE WHETHER IT HAS BEEN MET. THERE CERTAINLY HAS BEEN A REDUCTION IN CUBAN INTERVENTION.

Q: THE QUESTION WAS -- I DON'T THINK YOU EXACTLY ANSWERED IT, SOB -- IS THE UNITED STATES PREPARED TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN THIS, APART FROM SAYING IT IS READY? IS IT PREPARED TO TAKE ANY ACTION TO GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD?  
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PAGE 04 STATE 201575

A: WE HAVE SAID WE ARE PREPARED TO BEGIN A DIALOGUE. I REALLY CANNOT CARRY IT BEYOND THAT.

Q: IT SOUNDS LIKE RUSK WAITING FOR A TELEPHONE CALL FROM THE OTHER SIDE IN YEARS GONE BY.

A: ARE YOU, IN FACT, WAITING FOR A TELEPHONE CALL FROM CUBA?

A: I AM REALLY NOT GOING TO GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE SAID. INGERSOLL

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